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THE DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL

by

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to trace the development of the Australian Capital Territory Secondary Principals' Council (SPC) from the mid-fifties to the late seventies. The dramatic change from the monolithic centralised New South Wales state education system to one of autonomous school-based decision making of the new ACT School Authority forms the background on which this study is developed.

The changing fortunes of the SPC as a pressure group are followed from their prestigious days with the NSW school inspector to the depths of the conflicts of the early seventies when change towards autonomy was imminent. The Teachers' Federation, at this time, gained power at the expense of the SPC when the union demanded that it be the sole spokesman for ACT teachers.

The multiplicity of problems confronting the SPC in the late sixties and early seventies resulted in the forming of the Preservation of Principals Society (POPS), which conducted certain activities to allow principals to get away from such pressures.

The gradual gaining of acceptance, within this new task environment, by the SPC saw it become an expert unit within this participative model. SPC members are on many committees which function to improve the administration, the curricula, and other major facets of ACT education.

Finally, this study culminates in the SPC formulating a set of goals to guide its operations in the future. Tentative recommendations for Council to consider form a conclusion. These are to:

1. convince the ACT Legislative Assembly that the SPC is an expert body which should be heeded when the Assembly assumes control of local education, and
2. act as a group to monitor the curricula of their schools to ensure that a relevant education is available for the next generation.

Principals should initiate change for the future rather than react to the problems of the past.

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